

Letter from Mabel Hubbard Bell to Alexander Graham Bell, July 9, 1895, with transcript

Letter from Mrs. Alexander Graham Bell to Dr. Alexander Graham Bell. Paris, France, July 9, 1895. My darling Alec:

Three of your "notes" came this evening dated the 21st, 23rd and 24th June. The latest has thus been exactly two weeks on the way. You ought in the same manner to receive this on the 23rd, just about a month from the time you write yours.

I am very much interested in your water experiments and in the centre of gravity load shifting, but I am much distressed to think of the lonely solitary life you have been leading. Please darling make an effort to be more sociable and go to see people and have them come to see you. I can not bear to think of you living all alone, shut in yourself, holding no communication with your neighbors. Please dear try and see more of them and force yourself into more sympathy with them. Your work will not suffer, on the contrary it will gain for you will return refreshed to it from the enforced dismissal of all your problems from your mind for a while. Please please don't go back to such a life. Have people come and dine with you, go over to see Mr. and Mrs. Kennan, Mr. and Miss McCurdy. Never mind if you don't want to go, go as a duty to yourself and me. The very nuns here are not leading as solitary narrow a life as you. Please try and come out of your hermit cell, not allow all your faculties to rust for want of exercise. Even if the people are not altogether congenial to you, still the efforts to think of them will be good for you and your work will gain. As far as I can gather from your letters Mr. Ellis and Mr. Guillem are the only people who visit you. I am very unhappy about 2 it and distressed, for you are shortening your life and narrowing your sympathies by this course and both your life and sympathies are too valuable to be wasted. Also dear please remember you have a wife and children, be sociable for their sakes. You should have shown those young officers over the place yourself and given

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the laboratory a rest. I want you to succeed in your experiments, but not to lose all human interest in the process. Your deaf mute business is hardly human to you. You are very tender and gentle to the deaf children, but their interest to you lies in their being deaf not in their humanity, at least only in part.

In one of these letters you have for the first time spoken of your plans. It has been very hard on me being so entirely in the dark regarding them as of course mine depended on them. I have not felt at liberty to conclude any arrangement anywhere and do not now. If I were sure you would not go to Switzerland I would take the children there myself now, for one thing.

I was going to Brabizon with the children tomorrow to decide whether we liked a place there for a month, but Madame le Mere informed us that the ceremony of administering the final vows to nuns of the Assumption would take place tomorrow at Antenil Convent and that she would be glad to have us go and see it. Of course it would be a pity to miss such a sight so we are going, but I fear it will be rather pitiful and that I shall wish myself anywhere else. Elsie speaks rather hardly about it, she says she will feel inclined to get up and say, "You poor misguided beings, don't do it". The words are right enough and I should feel the same way, but Elsie's attitude seems rather of critical contempt. 3 I don't think she has a particle of poetry in her nature and sometimes it rather riles me to have her so apparently insensible to the sentiment and pathos of things. I would never be a Catholic myself and can imagine nothing more dreadful than to have any any one I much loved under the influence of the confessional, still the beautiful symbolism of the church appeals to me. Elsie sees nothing in it. I do not see why one can not have a nature large enough to see the beauty in all things though not designing it for one's self. I feel discouraged about Elsie's picture. So far Lefebre seems the most promising, but he asks \$3,000. Benjamin Constant gets \$3,000. for a head. They say Jules Lefebre is a good portrait painter. Would you pay \$2,000. for Elsie's picture? She is very lovely now and if properly dressed would be a stunner. But I don't care that she should be noticed now, that will have to come by and by. We are in a interregnum now. Mlle. Fillipi has gone and Madame le

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Mere does not approve of Mlle. Foley, so I can not have her. I like her myself and think her just the companion the children need at present. Opinions differ you see. I think Madame's objections are my recommendations. She is too young and vivacious. If we go to Brabizow we may not need her however.

I think I will write the Club about my visit to Bartholdi and Benjamin Constant. I don't feel sure enough of your receiving this to tell you anything more. I hope Mr. McCurdy agreeably disappointed you in the laboratory while you were away. Just think I don't know where you are now. Surely the Flint business is about over now. I hope so. It must be hot there and you were in no condition to stand a strain after your hard life. I don't like to hear of your not feeling 4 well, and being headachey. It's nothing but pure overwork and there is no need of such hard work.

Please take some play and keep the Sabbath.

Lovingly, Ever yours.